# The Association of Childhood Adversities and Abuse on Marital Functioning: A Longitudinal Secondary Analysis Study

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by

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## ABSTRACT

The current research analyzed the ways in which retrospective reports of traumatic childhood experiences and physical and emotional abuse may be associated with marital functioning among long-term married, intact couples in adulthood. Specifically, using a longitudinal sample of US adults who were married to the same person across the 10 years of the study (Midlife in the United States, n=1824), the study tested a set of related hypotheses that the association of childhood adversities with marital functioning would be mediated by personality traits, perceived control, and self-acceptance measured during adulthood. Outcome marital functioning variables included perceived risk of marriage ending (marital risk), frequency of marital disagreements, perceived support from marital partner, and strain in the marital relationship. Overall, the results indicate that childhood adversities have a strong association with marital risk but not with partner disagreement, partner support, or partner strain among long-term married couples. Personality traits, perceived control, and self-acceptance did not mediate this relationship. Additionally, the results provide limited support for the hypothesis that childhood emotional and physical abuse will be associated with later marital functioning. However, they did provide support that childhood emotional and physical abuse are associated with personality traits reported in adulthood. Emotional abuse was significantly associated with the personality traits of agency, agreeableness, neuroticism, and conscientiousness while physical abuse was significantly associated with agreeableness, neuroticism, and conscientiousness. Although the current research did not support the hypotheses fully, it did offer us a roadmap of how future research may be expanded to further explore these issues.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ginger Cates is currently in her final year of study for a Master's degree in Human Development at Cornell University. She will graduate in August 2017 with a Master of Arts degree. Ginger obtained a Bachelors of Arts in Psychology from Binghamton University in May 2016 where she was a research assistant in the Marriage and Family Studies Laboratory. As well, Ms. Cates completed an Independent Research Thesis exploring the relationship between depression and anxiety and marital social support. Her research interests include interpersonal relationships, personality psychology, and social psychology.

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There is no shortage of research on the long-term impacts of childhood trauma on adult health and well-being. However, there is very little research that examines how childhood traumatic events and experiences may be related to functioning in long-term marital relationships of older adults. There has been found to be an association between individuals diagnosed with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and impaired relationship functioning in terms of relationship satisfaction, relationship adjustment, intimacy, emotional expressiveness, communication, and sexual relations (DiLillo & Long, 1999; Whisman, 1999). As well, the separation and divorce rate are higher for those with a diagnosis of PTSD (Jordan, Marmar, Fairbanks, Schlenger, Kulka, Hough, & Weiss, 1992; Riggs, Byrne, Weathers, & Litz, 1998). In a society where more than 40% of married couples divorce, with an even higher rate for second or third marriages, marriage and family researchers have focused on how improving marital functioning can prevent divorce (Kazdin, 2000).

The first step to begin to explore how trauma and/or adversity plays a part in marital functioning it is to explore the ways in which current psychological states are formed by past experiences. How do traumatic or adversarial childhood experiences affect marital functioning? Do personality characteristics such as neuroticism and personal beliefs about the self such as perceived control and self-acceptance mediate the relationship between reports of childhood adversities/trauma and marital functioning? The current research analyzes the ways in which traumatic and/or abusive childhood experiences may affect marital functioning and whether personality traits, perceived control, and self-acceptance mediate this relationship.

There is a plethora of theories of the ways in which personality is developed throughout the lifespan. Some researchers believe that personality is molded by one's early environment and exposure (Bowlby, 1969) while others believe that it is more adaptive and responsive to one's current situation and stressors (Haan, Millsap, & Hartka, 1986). Further, much research has been focused on the role that childhood abuse and/or adversities play on the development of personality traits. Bowlby (1969) believed that childhood experiences were an integral part of the development of personality as a result of attachment styles and the parent/child bond. Nakao, et al. (2000) found that the family environment was associated with extraversion, maturity, and intellect in adolescence. They also found that different aspects of the childhood environment were associated with different personality traits.

As well, childhood adversities have been found to be correlated with the development of DSM-IV disorders. Green et al. (2010) found there was quite a large correlation between the first onset of a DSM-IV disorder and previous childhood adversity. Adversities they included in their study were parental death, parental divorce, other types of separation from parents/caregivers, parental maladjustment such as mental illness, substance abuse, criminality, violence, physical and sexual abuse, neglect, life-threatening illness in the child, and extreme socioeconomic adversity within the childhood home. These results suggested that childhood adversities were associated

with 44.6% of childhood-onset disorders and 25.9-32% of later-onset disorders.

Other researchers have focused on the process of how the association of childhood adversity and mental disorder comes about. A study testing a hypothesis of stress sensitization, hypothesizing that adults who experienced childhood adversity maintain an increased vulnerability to stress across life, concluded that "High levels of childhood adversity may

represent a general diathesis for multiple types of psychopathology that persists throughout the life-course" (McLaughlin, et al., 2010, p. 1).

The Traumagenic dynamics theory states that childhood trauma, most notably sexual abuse, can impact personality through the dynamics of betrayal, traumatic sexualization, stigmatization, and powerlessness. Stigmatization is defined as distorting a child's sense of their own value and worth. Powerlessness "distorts children's sense of their ability to control their lives" (Finkelhor & Browne, 1985, p. 530). Childhood adversities have been found to be associated with the risk of neuroticism and negative affect. Participants in three different age cohorts (20-24 years, 40-44 years, and 60-64 years) self-reported adversities occurring before the age of 16. They also completed a battery of personality questionnaire's including the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire for neuroticism as well as the Positive and Negative Affect Scales for affect (Rosenman & Rodgers, 2006). High levels of childhood adversity were found to significantly increased the risk of higher levels of neuroticism in all age groups tested by Rosenman and Rodgers (2006), and perceived negative social support from family, friends, and partner was also associated with childhood adversity.

If childhood adversities have the potential to affect personality so strongly, it must be considered in what ways this ultimately effects interpersonal relationships and marital functioning. Savla, Roberto, Jaramillo-Sierra, Gambrel, Karimi, and Butner (2013) examined the ways in which childhood abuse and adversity influences emotional closeness with family in adulthood in two different aged cohorts, middle aged and older adults using the Midlife in the United States longitudinal data (MIDUS; Brim, et al., 1996). They looked at the association of childhood abuse and adversity with perceived control and self-acceptance, personality characteristics, and gender and found that emotional and physical abuse predicated family closeness in middle-aged adults (35-49 years) but only emotional abuse predicted for older adults

(50-74 years). Self-acceptance moderated the effect of emotional and physical abuse on family closeness for middle-aged adults.

Colman and Widom (2004) examined the ways in which childhood adversity is associated not just with the quality of adult intimate relationships but rather the pattern of adults who have experienced childhood adversity entering into intimate relationships. Results showed that adults who had experienced childhood adversity had higher rates of cohabitation, walking out on the relationship, and getting divorced in cases where they were married. That result remained consistent across both men and women. However, female abuse victims were more likely to have negative perceptions of current romantic interests and to not be as faithful as women who had not experienced abuse. These tendencies to give up earlier on romantic relationships would be expected to result in higher marital risk and lower marital satisfaction. The negative perceptions of current romantic relationships could impact marital satisfaction and perceived marital functioning.

Following the theory of attachment introduced by Bowlby (1969), romantic partnerships are the closest relationships adults have that mirror or in some way resemble the parent-child relationships that he posits influence the development of personality. By focusing on these romantic partnerships, researchers found that wives experienced lower marital satisfaction as the result of severe childhood neglect and had a harder time trusting their husbands' reliability as the result of psychological abuse. Husbands tended to have lower marital satisfaction and a harder time with trust as the result of both physical and psychological abuse. (DiLillo, Peugh, Walsh, Panuzio, Trask, & Evans, 2009). DiLillo, et al. (2009) also found that physical abuse, psychological abuse, and neglect were associated with lower marital satisfaction for men. However, only neglect was associated with lower marital satisfaction for women. Overall, they found that the association between maltreatment and marital functioning was stronger for men

than it was for women. Additionally, multiple studies have found that individuals who experienced childhood sexual or physical abuse or neglect have a higher rate of divorce and lower levels of marital satisfaction (Colman & Widom, 2004; Finkelhor, Hotaling, Lewis, & Smith, 1989; Whisman, 2006).

Beyond physical abuse, emotional maltreatment is often overlooked in research aimed at the effects of childhood maltreatment, and it is often difficult to recognize and measure. Child abuse has been found to effect one's self-awareness, agency, self-continuity, and self-coherence and has been found to result in low levels of self-worth, anxiety, depression, anger, dissociation, somatization, heightened self-criticism, and shame (Reyome, 2010). As well, Reyome found extensive literature supporting the conclusion that emotional maltreatment results in deficits in interpersonal relationships, specifically in the areas of "lower relationship quality, greater fear of intimacy, and distance in interpersonal relationships" (Reyome, 2010, p. 227). After reviewing multiple studies, Reyome found evidence that childhood emotional abuse is associated with lower-quality marriages, lower marital satisfaction, and marital dissolution.

Belt and Abidin (1996) examined the association between childhood parenting styles and later marriage quality. Rather than evaluating based solely on childhood abuse, they looked at parenting styles in childhood to see if this may mediate abuse's impact on later functioning. Using a non-clinical sample of 159 married men and women who experienced low levels of abuse, they found that there was a significant difference in the results based on gender. For women, verbal abuse in childhood predicated marital conflict while caring parenting predicted the depth of their marital relationship. However, for men, abuse did not predict marital relationship functioning. This supports other findings that women will be more likely to have marital functioning effected by childhood adversity.

If childhood abuse and/or adversities effect personality traits, then it stands to reason that it would by extension effect marital satisfaction and functioning. Umberson, Williams, Powers, Liu, and Needham (2005) evaluated the ways in which stress effects marital quality from a life course perspective, asking if the effect of stress changes at different points within the life course. They further evaluated whether childhood family stress experiences influenced the effects of adult stress on marital relationships. They found that adult stress has a cumulative effect on marriage over time, and this relationship is much stronger for those who had higher levels of stress in childhood. This would suggest that those who experienced higher levels of childhood adversities may be more vulnerable to stress in adulthood, thereby more negatively affecting marital relationships. Alternatively, those who report very little adversity in childhood have fairly stable marital relationship experiences.

Whisman (2006) expanded upon prior research of childhood abuse and divorce by examining the relationship between seven specific childhood traumas and two marital outcomes of marital disruption and marital satisfaction. Two separate classes of childhood adversities were evaluated; assaultive violence including physical abuse, rape, sexual molestation, threatened with weapon, held captive, kidnapped, or seriously physically attacked or assaulted and non-assaultive violence including being involved in a life-threatening accident or being involved in a fire, flood, or other natural disaster. Whisman found that childhood adversity significant predicated higher marital disruption and lower marital satisfaction. When breaking down the different types of adversities, Whisman found that childhood trauma involving accidents or natural disaster were not related to marital disruption or satisfaction, unlike childhood trauma involving assaultive violence.

Protective factors allow many to overcome their childhood adversities and successfully adapt in adulthood, allowing them to maintain stable relationships over time. Fergusson and

Horwood (2003) found that personality factors "may exacerbate or mitigate the effects of exposure to childhood adversity" (Fergusson and Horwood, 2003, p. 19). They found that low novelty seeking, high self-esteem, and low neuroticism mitigated the effects of childhood adversities. Could these protective factors allow those who experienced childhood adversities to still maintain stable relationships in adulthood? Findings suggest that personality traits may be the answer to this question.

Much has been explored and written regarding the development of personality traits, and the effect that childhood adversities play on the development of these traits. The field of psychology has produced no shortage of research on this connection. As well, there has been extensive research on the ways in which childhood adversities effect marital functioning. We now tie these two research streams together by exploring the ways in which childhood adversities may be associated with marital functioning in longer-term married couples and how certain personality traits may mediate this effect.

*Hypothesis 1:* Childhood adversities will be associated with higher marital risk, partner disagreement, and partner strain and lower levels of partner support.

*Hypothesis 2:* Emotional and physical abuse during childhood will be associated with higher marital risk, partner disagreement, and partner strain and lower levels of partner support.

*Hypothesis 3:* Childhood adversities will be associated with personality traits in adulthood; specifically, lower agency, agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness to experience, and higher neuroticism.

*Hypothesis 4:* Childhood emotional and physical abuse will be associated with lower agency, agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness to experience, and higher neuroticism in adulthood.

*Hypothesis 5:* Perceived control and self-acceptance will mediate the effects of childhood adversities, emotional abuse, and physical abuse negatively on marital risk, partner disagreement, and partner strain, and positively on partner support.

## Methods

### Sample and Design

The National Survey of Midlife in the United States (MIDUS; Brim, et al., 1996; Ryff, Almeida, & Ayanian, 2016) was used in this study. The MIDUS is a nationally representative 3-wave study of adults originally aged 25-74 years old living within the United States. For purposes of the study, only the national random digit dialing (RDD) sample was used so that the analyses would represent adults in the United States. The first wave was conducted in 1995-1996 and collected data from 3,487 English-speaking, non-institutionalized adults in the US. The second wave took place in 2004-2006, and the RDD sample included 2,257 of the original participants (Ryff, et al., 2014). See Table 1 for descriptive statistics.

For purposes of this study, to examine the key study relationships among stably married adults, a subset consisting of those married to the same person from Wave 1 to Wave 3 was used. This subset was then further reduced to include only those participants who answered the questions about whether they experienced childhood adversities and emotional and physical abuse in childhood. The total sample remaining for analysis was 1,824. Childhood adversities consisted of 27 questions asked in Wave 2 such as "Repeated year of school," "Sent away from home because you did something wrong," etc. (full list in Appendix A). Childhood adversities were collected only in Wave 2 and therefore are not available in Wave 1.

**Independent Variables**

Some of the variables and scales used in this study were not measured consistently across the three Waves of the MIDUS. For purposes of this analysis, Wave 2 measures that matched those in Wave 1 were used.

*Childhood Traumas/Adversities:* Participants answered a set of questions in Wave 2 regarding adversities or trauma experienced as a child or teenager. These questions were derived from the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study (Felitti, et al., 1998). For each adversity, a dummy code was created (0 = no; 1 = yes) which indicated if each participant experienced that particular adversity. These dummy codes were then summed to create a variable that counted the number of adversities each participant experienced during childhood. The 27 questions are listed in Appendix A ($n$ = 1824, $m$ = .47, $SD$ = 0.837, range: 0-9).

*Childhood Emotional Abuse:* Participants answered a series of eight questions in Wave 1 regarding emotional abuse on a scale of 0 to 3 using a shortened Conflict Tactics Sale (Straus, 1979). Only the 6 questions involving abuse from family were included in the measure used in this study. Participants indicated how often mother, father, brother, or sister acted in a certain way such "insulted you or swore at you," and "Sulked or refused to talk to you" on a scale of 1 = often, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Rarely, 4 = never, 8 = does not apply. Participants who answered at least one of the emotional abuse questions were included in the study, and responses were averaged across all indicated family members to create an indicator of the frequency of emotional abuse experienced from all family members reported ($n$ = 1736, $m$ = .96, $SD$ = 0.669, range: 0 - 3). See Appendix B for full list of questions.

*Childhood Physical Abuse:* Participants answered a series of eight questions in Wave 1 regarding physical abuse on a scale of 0 to 3 using the Conflict Tactics Sale (Straus, 1979). Questions included asking if mother, father, brother, or sister had "Slapped you," "Threw

something at you" etc. on a scale of 1 = often, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Rarely, 4 = never, 8 = does not apply. Participants who answered at least one of the physical abuse questions were included, and responses were averaged across all indicated family members to create an indicator of the frequency of physical abuse experienced from all family members reported ($n$ = 1744, $m$ = .57, $SD$ = 0.487, range: 0 - 3). See Appendix B for full list of questions.

*Self-Acceptance:* Based on previous findings from the MIDUS, we included measures of self-acceptance (Springer, Pudrovska, & Hauser, 2011). Participants were administered six questions from the Ryff Psychological Well-Being scale during the first wave that measured self-acceptance (Ryff, 1989). The self-acceptance scale included questions such as, "In general, I feel confident and positive about myself"; "I like most parts of my personality." The response options were 1 = Strongly agree, 2 = Somewhat agree, 3 = A little agree, 4 = Neither agree or disagree, 5 = A little disagree, 6 = Somewhat disagree, and 7 = Strongly disagree, and the scale was constructed by calculating the sum of the items. Higher scores represent higher levels of self-acceptance (wave 1 $\alpha$ = 0.59, $n$ = 1760, $m$ = 17.32, $SD$ = 3.22, range: 3-21).

*Perceived Control*: Perceived control was operationalized by combining two characteristics which included personal mastery (e.g., "I can do just about anything I really set my mind to"; "What happens to me in the future mostly depends on me") and perceived constraints (e.g., "There is little I can do to change the important things in my life"; "I often feel helpless in dealing with the problems of life)." The response options were 1 = Strongly agree, 2 = Somewhat agree, 3 = A little agree, 4 = Neither agree or disagree, 5 = A little disagree, 6 = Somewhat disagree, and 7 = Strongly disagree, and the scale was constructed by calculating the mean of the 12 items from personal mastery and perceived constraints. Higher scores represent higher levels of perceived control (wave 1 $\alpha$ = 0.85, $n$ = 1758, $m$ = 5.64, $SD$ = .95, range: 1.75-7).

*Personality traits*: The MIDUS interview included 31 self-descriptive adjectives (Appendix C) and asked to rate how well each of them fit their personality with response options of 1 = A lot, 2 = Some, 3 = A little, and 4 = Not at all. The adjectives measured the personality categories of neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and agency, and scales were constructed by calculating the mean across each set of items. Higher scores reflect higher standings in each category. The adjectives were chosen from existing trait lists and inventories (Bem, 1981; Goldber, 1992; John, 1990; Trapness & Wiggins, 1990). Cronbach's alphas ranged from 0.74 to 0.80 for wave 1 ($n$ = 1756, $m$ = 2.18, $SD$ = 0.651, range: 1-4).

*Gender:* Gender was self-reported. Gender is coded as Female, and coded 0=male, 1=female.

*Educational attainment:* Education was self-reported and coded as 1 = No school/some grade school (1-6); 2 = Eighth grade/junior high school (7-8); 3 = Some high school (9-12 no diploma/no GED); 4 = GED, 5 = Graduated from high school; 6 = 1 to 2 years of college, no degree yet; 7 = 3 or more years of college, no degree yet; 8 = Grad from 2-year college, vocational school, or association; 9 = Graduated from 4- or 5-year college or Bachelor's degree; 10 = Some graduate school; 11 = Master's degree; 12 = PhD, ED. D, MD, DDS, LLB, LLD, JD, or other professional degree ($n$ = 1821, $m$ = 7.57, $SD$ = 2.49, range: 1-12).

**Dependent variables**

Participants responded to four scales of marital functioning which included marital risk, partner support, partner strain, and partner disagreement. Responses from waves 1 and 2 were analyzed.

*Marital Risk*: In Wave 1, participants responded to five questions such as "During the past year, how often have you thought your relationship might be in trouble?" and "What do you think the changes are that you and your partner will eventually separate?". In Wave 2 only two questions were asked. Question 1 asked "During the past year, how often have you thought your relationship might be in trouble?" and the response options were 1 = Never, 2 = Once, 3 = A few times, 4 = Most of the time, and 5 = All the time. Question 2 asked "…what do you think the chances are that you and your partner will eventually separate?", and the response options were 1 = Very likely, 2 = Somewhat likely, 3 = Not very likely, and 4 = Not likely at all. See appendix D. In order to maintain consistency between waves, only the first two questions were used in the analysis and only those participants that answered both questions were included. Marital risk was defined by calculating the mean of the two items in Wave 1 and by summing the values of the two items in Wave 2. Higher values indicate higher levels of marital risk (wave 1 $\alpha = 0.69$, $n = 4658$, $m = 3.42$, $SD = 1.68$, range: 2-10; wave 2 $\alpha = 0.77$, $n = 3055$, $m = 3.06$, $SD = 1.52$, range: 1-9)

*Partner Disagreement*: Participants were asked to indicate on a Likert scale (1 = A lot, 2 = Some, 3 = A little, 4 = Not at all) how much they and their spouse disagree on three questions (e.g., Money matters such as how much to spend, save, or invest;" "Leisure time activities such as what to do and with whom;" and "Household tasks, such as what needs doing and who does it."). See Appendix E. The scale was constructed by summing the values of the questions. Higher scores indicate higher levels of disagreement (wave 1 $\alpha = 0.67$, $n = 4665$, $m = 6.2$, $SD = 2.23$, range: 2-12; wave 2 $\alpha = 0.74$, $n = 3054$, $m = 5.81$, $SD = 2.17$, range: 3-12).

*Partner Support:* Participants responded to six items indicating support (e.g., "How much does your spouse or partner really care about you?"; "How much does he or she appreciate you?") and response options were 1 = A lot, 2 = Some, 3 = A little, 4 = Not at all. Partner

support was defined by calculating the mean of the six items. Higher scores indicate higher levels of support (wave 1 α = 0.86, *n* = 4654, *m* = 3.59, *SD* = 0.57, range: 1-4; wave 2 α = 0.90, *n* = 3056, *m* = 3.63, *SD* = 0.54, range: 1-4).

*Partner Strain*: Participants responded to six items indication strain (e.g., "How often does he or she argue with you?"; "How often does he or she get on your nerves?") with response options of 1 = Often, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Rarely, and 4 = Never, and partner strain was defined by calculating the mean of the items. Higher scores reflect higher strain (wave 1 α = 0.81, *n* = 4654, *m* = 2.23, *SD* = 0.62, range: 1-4; wave 2 α = 0.87, *n* = 3054, *m* = 2.15, *SD* = 0.61, range: 1-4).

Regression analyses were conducted to analyze the association between childhood abuse and adversities and later marital risk, partner disagreement, partner support, and partner strain. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the sample used and the variables analyzed.

Table 1

*Marital Risk, Partner Disagreement, Partner Support, Partner Strain, Childhood Adversities, Perceived Control, Self-Acceptance, Neuroticism, and Demographic Controls: Descriptive Statistics*

| | | | | Range | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | n | M | SD | Minimum | Maximum |
| Marital Risk W1 | 1742 | 3.12 | 1.43 | 2 | 10 |
| Marital Risk W2 | 1596 | 2.84 | 1.29 | 1 | 9 |
| Partner Disagreement W1 | 1743 | 6.03 | 2.07 | 2 | 12 |
| Partner Disagreement W2 | 1594 | 5.72 | 2.04 | 3 | 12 |
| Partner Support W1 | 1742 | 3.65 | .49 | 1 | 4 |
| Partner Support W2 | 1597 | 3.67 | .47 | 1 | 4 |
| Partner Strain W1 | 1742 | 2.17 | .57 | 1 | 4 |
| Partner Strain W2 | 1597 | 2.13 | .56 | 1 | 4 |
| Female (0,1) | 1824 | .49 | .50 | 0 | 1 |
| Age W1 | 1824 | 45.78 | 10.44 | 25 | 74 |
| Educational Attainment W2[a] | 1821 | 7.57 | 2.49 | 1 | 12 |
| CA27 W2 | 1824 | .47 | .837 | 0 | 9 |
| Childhood Emotional Abuse W1 | 1736 | .96 | .67 | 0 | 3 |
| Childhood Physical Abuse W1 | 1744 | .57 | .49 | 0 | 3 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perceived Control W1 | 1758 | 5.64 | .95 | 1.75 | 7 |
| Self-Acceptance W1 | 1760 | 17.32 | 3.22 | 3 | 21 |
| Neuroticism W1 | 1756 | 2.18 | .651 | 1 | 4 |

*Note.* CA27 = Childhood Adversities 27-item scale. W1 = Wave 1. W2 = Wave
[a] Highest level of education completed, coded into 12 categories. The median education in MIDUS is "some college."

## Results

**Hypothesis 1 -** Childhood Adversity will be associated with higher marital risk, partner disagreement, and partner strain and lower levels of partner support (Table 2).

When considering marital risk, all correlations returned as expected and hypothesized. Marital risk was stable between Wave 1 and Wave 2, $r(1554) = .45$, $p = .000$. Childhood adversities were significantly correlated with marital risk, $r(1596) = .09$, $p = .00$. Partner disagreement and childhood adversities were not significantly correlated, $r(1594) = .03$, $p = 26$. The findings for partner support were very similar to those for partner disagreement, and all correlations found were as we would expect from theory. Partner support and childhood adversities were negatively correlated, $r(1597) = -.03$, $p = .24$, but this was not a significant finding. Partner strain and childhood adversities, however, were significantly correlated, $r(1597) = .05$. $p = .04$.

We then performed regression analysis of our outcome variables. Model 1 (Table 3) ($R^2 = .22$, $F(5, 1552) = 89.19$, $p = .00$) evaluated marital risk and childhood adversities as well as demographic variables. Marital risk was stable across time from Wave 1 to Wave 2. As well, childhood adversities were associated with marital risk ($B = .09$, $p = .01$). Female, ($B = .14$, $p = .02$) and age ($B = .01$, $p = .00$) were associated with marital risk but education was not ($B = .02$, $p = .19$).

Model 1 (Table 4) ($R^2$ = .21, $F$(5, 1551) = 82.7, $p$ = .00) evaluated partner disagreement and childhood adversities as well as demographic variables. Partner disagreement was stable across time from Wave 1 to Wave 2. Childhood adversities was not associated with partner disagreement ($B$ = .01, $p$ = .88) nor was female, ($B$ = -.03, $p$ = .78) or education ($B$ = .01, $p$ = .58) but age ($B$ = -.02, $p$ = .00) was.

Model 1 (Table 5) ($R^2$ = .36, $F$(5, 1553) = 171.70, $p$ = .00) evaluated partner support and childhood adversities as well as demographic variables. Partner support was stable across time from Wave 1 to Wave 2. Childhood adversities was not significantly associated with partner support ($B$ = -.01, $p$ = .27) or education ($B$ = -.01, $p$ = .07) but was significantly associated with female ($B$ = -.10, $p$ = .00) and age ($B$ = .00, $p$ = .00).

Model 1 (Table 6) ($R^2$ = .4, $F$(5, 1553) = 204.23, $p$ = .00) evaluated partner strain and childhood adversities as well as demographic variables. Partner strain was stable across time from Wave 1 to Wave 2. Childhood adversities was not associated with partner strain ($B$ = .02, $p$ = .12) or education ($B$ = .00, $p$ = .4) but was significantly associated with female, ($B$ = .05, $p$ = .04) and age ($B$ = -.00, $p$ = .00) was.

These findings supported our hypothesis that childhood adversity would positively impact marital risk but did not support our hypothesis that it would impact the other outcome variables of partner disagreement, partner support, or partner strain.

**Hypothesis 2 -** Emotional and physical abuse during childhood will be associated with higher marital risk, partner disagreement, and partner strain and lower levels of partner support (Table 7).

We further hypothesized that the emotional and physical abuse during childhood would significantly impact the outcome variables. Childhood emotional, $r$(1548) = .13, $p$ = .00, and

physical abuse, $r(1555) = .09$, $p = .00$, were significantly correlated with marital risk. Partner disagreement and childhood emotional, $r(1546) = .13$, $p = .00$, and physical abuse, $r(1553) = .08$, $p = .00$, were also significantly correlated. The findings for partner support showed that for both emotional abuse, $r(1549) = -.08$, $p = .00$, and physical abuse, $r(1556) = -.05$, $p = .04$, there was a significant negative correlation, as expected. Partner strain and childhood emotional, $r(1549) = .16$, $p = .00$, and physical abuse, $r(1556) = .12$, $p = .00$, were also significantly correlated.

We then used linear regression to evaluate the association between childhood emotional and physical abuse with our outcome variables. This analysis found there was no significant association between childhood emotional (Table 8) or physical abuse (Table 9) and any of the four outcome variables. Marital risk and emotional abuse ($R^2 = .22$, $F(5, 1531) = 85.5$, $p = .00$) were found to not be significantly associated ($B = .08$, $p = .08$). Marital risk and physical abuse ($R^2 = .22$, $F(5, 1538) = 85.73$, $p = .00$) were found to not be significantly associated ($B = .06$, $p = .33$). Partner disagreement and emotional abuse ($R^2 = .21$, $F(5, 1530) = 80.21$, $p = .00$) were found to not be significantly associated ($B = .14$, $p = .06$). Partner disagreement and physical abuse ($R^2 = .21$, $F(5, 1537) = 79.44$, $p = .00$) were found to not be significantly associated ($B = .06$, $p = .51$). Partner support and emotional abuse ($R^2 = .36$, $F(5, 1532) = 168.25$, $p = .00$) were found to not be significantly associated ($B = -.02$, $p = .31$). Partner support and physical abuse ($R^2 = .36$, $F(5, 1539) = 169.14$, $p = .00$) were found to not be significantly associated ($B = -.02$, $p = .37$). Partner strain and emotional abuse ($R^2 = .396$, $F(5, 1532) = 199.82$, $p = .00$) were found to not be significantly associated ($B = .03$, $p = .07$. Partner strain and physical abuse ($R^2 = .39$, $F(5, 1539) = 198.72$, $p = .00$) were found to not be significantly associated ($B = .03$, $p = .19$).

**Hypothesis 3 -** Childhood adversities will be associated with personality traits in adulthood, specifically, lower agency, agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness to experience, and higher neuroticism (Table 10).

Analysis found that childhood adversities was significantly correlated only with neuroticism, $r(1756) = .06$, $p = .02$. Agency $r(1754) = .00$, $p = 1.0$, agreeableness, $r(1757) = -.01$, $p = .69$, extraversion $r(1758) = .01$, $p = .84$, conscientiousness $r(1758) = -.02$, $p = .4$, and openness to experience, $r(1757) = -.00$, $p = .85$, were all found to have no significant correlation with childhood adversities (Table 6).

We then performed regression analysis of the neuroticism variable and found that neuroticism was significantly associated only with partner disagreement but not with the other three outcome variables. We first examined marital risk (Table 3), and in Model 2 we added neuroticism to the demographic variables and childhood adversities variables ($R^2 = .22$, $F(6, 1548) = 74.12$, $p = .00$), and controlling for marital risk at Wave 1, neuroticism was not related to marital risk at Wave 2 ($B = .01$, $p = .83$). It was not mediating the relationship between childhood adversities and marital risk at all.

For partner disagreement (Table 4, Model 3) we again added neuroticism to the demographic variables and childhood adversities variables ($R^2 = .22$, $F(6, 1547) = 70.25$, $p = .00$), and controlling for partner disagreement at Wave 1, neuroticism was related to partner disagreement at Wave 2 ($B = .17$, $p = .02$).

For partner support (Table 5, Model 3) we again added neuroticism to the demographic variables and childhood adversities variables ($R^2 = .36$, $F(6, 1549) = 144.92$, $p = .00$), and controlling for partner support at Wave 1, neuroticism was not related to partner support at Wave 2 ($B = .01$, $p = .47$).

For partner strain (Table 6, Model 3) we again added neuroticism to the demographic variables and childhood adversities variables ($R^2$ = .4, $F$(6, 1549) = 169.32, $p$ = .00), and controlling for partner strain at Wave 1, neuroticism was not related to partner strain at Wave 2 ($B$ = .01, $p$ = .65).

**Hypothesis 4** – We further hypothesized that childhood emotional and physical abuse would be associated with personality traits in adulthood; specifically, lower agency, agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness to experience and higher neuroticism (Table 11).

Analyses found that childhood emotional abuse was significantly correlated with agreeableness $r$(1733) = -.1, $p$ = .00; neuroticism $r$(1732) = .18, $p$ = .00; *and* conscientiousness $r$(1734) = -.01, $p$ = .01; and was not associated with agency $r$(1730) = .05, $p$ = .05; extraversion $r$(1734) = -.04, $p$ = .08; or openness to experience, $r$(1733) = .16, $p$ = .5.

Analysis further found that childhood physical abuse was also significantly correlated with agreeableness $r$(1741) = -.08, $p$ = .00; neuroticism $r$(1740) = .12, $p$ = .00; *and* conscientiousness $r$(1742) = -.05, $p$ = .04; and was not associated with agency $r$(1738) = .04, $p$ = .09; extraversion $r$(1742) = -.01, $p$ = .64; or openness to experience, $r$(1741) = .02, $p$ = .5.

**Hypothesis 5 –** We further hypothesized that the personality traits of perceived control and self-acceptance would mediate the effects of childhood adversity, emotional abuse, and physical abuse negatively on marital risk, partner disagreement, and partner strain, and positively on partner support (Table 12).

Analysis found that self-acceptance was significantly correlated to all outcome variables. As expected, it was negatively correlated with of marital risk, $r$(1570) = -.18, $p$ = .00, partner disagreement, $r$(1568) = -16, $p$ = .00, and partner strain, $r$(1571) = - .22, $p$ = .00, and positively

correlated with partner support, $r(1571) = .19$, $p = .00$. Similarly, perceived control was significantly negatively correlated with marital risk, $r(1568) = -.10$, $p = .00$, partner disagreement, $r(1566) = -.14$, $p = .00$, and partner strain, $r(1569) = -.20$, $p = .00$, and significantly positively correlated with partner support, $r(1569) = .18$, $p = .00$.

*Marital Risk*

We then performed our regression model for marital risk shown in Model 3 of Table 3, and we evaluated childhood adversities and perceived control ($R^2 = .22$, $F(6, 1550) = 74.35$, $p = .00$), and we found this was not mediating the relationship between childhood adversities and marital risk ($B = .08$, $p = .01$). Model 4 of Table 3 evaluated childhood adversities and self-acceptance ($R^2 = .23$, $F(6, 1551) = 76.28$, $p = .00$) and we found that, although self-acceptance was associated with marital risk ($B = -.03$, $p = .00$), this did not mediate the relationship between childhood adversities and marital risk ($B = .08$, $p = .01$).

Model 5 of Table 3 then included all variables; childhood adversities, demographic variables, neuroticism, perceived control, and self-acceptance ($R^2 = .23$, $F(8, 1546) = 56.99$, $p = .00$). In this model, the only personality trait variable that remained significantly associated with marital risk was self-acceptance ($B = -.03$, $p = .00$); perceived control ($B = .02$, $p = .55$) and neuroticism ($B = -.04$, $p = .5$) were not significant, and none of these mediated the relationship between childhood adversities and marital risk ($B = .08$, $p = .01$).

The regression model for marital risk is shown in Model 3 of Table 13 and childhood emotional and physical abuse and perceived control ($R^2 = .22$, $F(7, 1528) = 60.88$, $p = .00$), and we found this was not mediating the relationship between marital risk and childhood emotional abuse ($B = .08$, $p = .17$) or physical abuse ($B = -.02$, $p = .8$) Model 4 of Table 13 evaluated childhood abuse and self-acceptance ($R^2 = .22$, $F(7, 1529) = 62.48$, $p = .00$) and we found that

this was also not mediating the relationship between marital risk and childhood emotional abuse ($B$ = .08, $p$ = .19) or physical abuse ($B$ = -.02, $p$ = .78).

Model 5 of Table 13 then included all variables; emotional abuse, physical abuse, demographic variables, neuroticism, perceived control, and self-acceptance ($R^2$ = .22, $F$(9, 1524) = 48.45, $p$ = .00). In this model, only self-acceptance remained significantly associated with marital risk ($B$ = -.03, $p$ = .00); perceived control ($B$ = .03, $p$ = .49) and neuroticism ($B$ = -.04, $p$ = .4) were not significant. None of these mediated the relationship between marital risk and childhood emotional ($B$ = .09, $p$ = .16) or physical ($B$ = -.02, $p$ = .77) abuse.

These results indicated that the measure of childhood adversities does have an association with marital risk, and this association is stable across time ($R^2$ = .22). However, childhood emotional and physical abuse do not have a significant association with marital risk. As well, although there was evidence to support testing for mediation, once tested it was found that there was no mediation of the relationship between childhood adversities and marital risk.

*Partner Disagreement*

The regression model for partner disagreement is shown as Model 3 of Table 4. We evaluated childhood adversities and perceived control ($R^2$ = .22, $F$(6, 1549) = 70.78, $p$ = .00) as predictors, and we found that although perceived control was associated with partner disagreement ($B$ = -.15, $p$ = .00), it was not mediating the relationship between childhood adversities and partner disagreement ($B$ = .01, $p$ = .91). Model 4 of Table 4 evaluated childhood adversities and self-acceptance ($R^2$ = .22, $F$(6, 1550) = 71.27, $p$ = .00) and we found that this also was associated with partner disagreement ($B$ = -.05, $p$ = .00), but it was not mediating the relationship between childhood adversities and partner disagreement ($B$ = .00, $p$ = .98).

Model 5 of Table 4 then included all variables; childhood adversities, demographic variables, neuroticism, perceived control, and self-acceptance ($R^2$ = .22, $F$(8, 1545) = 53.80, $p$ = .00). In this model, self-acceptance ($B$ = -.03, $p$ = .11), perceived control ($B$ = -.07, $p$ = .23) and neuroticism ($B$ = -.08, $p$ = .33) were all found to not be significantly associated with partner disagreement and none of these were mediating factors in the relationship between partner disagreement and childhood adversities ($B$ = -.00, $p$ = .99).

We then evaluated our regression model for partner disagreement Model 3 of Table 14 and childhood emotional and physical abuse and perceived control ($R^2$ = .21, $F$(7, 1527) = 58.08, $p$ = .00), and we found this was not mediating the relationship between partner disagreement and childhood emotional abuse ($B$ = .16, $p$ = .09) or physical abuse ($B$ = -.01, $p$ = .45) Model 4 evaluated childhood abuse and self-acceptance ($R^2$ = .21, $F$(7, 1528) = 58.67, $p$ = .00) and we found that this was also not mediating the relationship between partner disagreement and childhood emotional abuse ($B$ = .17, $p$ = .07) or physical abuse ($B$ = -.11, $p$ = .39).

Model 5 of Table 14 then included all variables; emotional abuse, physical abuse, demographic variables, neuroticism, perceived control, and self-acceptance ($R^2$ = .21, $F$(9, 1523) = 45.81, $p$ = .00). In this model, there was no mediation between partner disagreement and emotional abuse ($B$ = .15, $p$ = .11) or physical abuse ($B$ = -.11, $p$ = .42).

*Partner Support*

We then evaluated our regression model for partner support Model 3 of Table 5), and we evaluated childhood adversities and perceived control ($R^2$ = .36, $F$(6, 1551) = 143.08, $p$ = .00), and we found this was not mediating the relationship between childhood adversities and partner support ($B$ = -.01, $p$ = .28). Model 4 of Table 5 evaluated childhood adversities and self-acceptance ($R^2$ = .36, $F$(6, 1552) = 145.98, $p$ = .00) and we found that this was not mediating the relationship between childhood adversities and partner support ($B$ = -.01, $p$ = .36).

Model 5 of Table 5 then included all variables; childhood adversities, demographic variables, neuroticism, perceived control, and self-acceptance ($R^2$ = .362, $F$(8, 1547) = 109.18, $p$ = .00). In this model, it was found that self-acceptance ($B$ = .01, $p$ = .13), perceived control ($B$ = .01, $p$ = .51) and neuroticism ($B$ = .03, $p$ = .13) were not associated with partner support and were not mediating the relationship between partner support and childhood adversities ($B$ = -.01, $p$ = .32).

These results indicated that the measure of childhood adversities does not have an association with partner support. We did not evaluate the relationship or mediation between partner support and childhood emotional or physical abuse as preliminary findings showed there was no significant association.

*Partner Strain*

We then evaluated our regression model for partner strain Model 3 of Table 6, and we evaluated childhood adversities and perceived control ($R^2$ = .4, $F$(5, 1551) = 170.94, $p$ = .00), and we found this was not mediating the relationship between childhood adversities and partner strain ($B$ = .02, $p$ = .12). Model 4 of Table 6 evaluated childhood adversities and self-acceptance ($R^2$ = .40, $F$(6, 1552) = 173.01, $p$ = .00) and we found that this did not mediate the relationship between childhood adversities and partner strain ($B$ = .02, $p$ = .15).

Model 5 of Table 6 then included all variables; childhood adversities, demographic variables, neuroticism, perceived control, and self-acceptance ($R^2$ = .40, $F$(8, 1547) = 128.55, $p$ = .00). In this model, the only personality trait variable that remained significant was self-acceptance ($B$ = -.01, $p$ = .02); perceived control ($B$ = -.010, $p$ = .50) and neuroticism ($B$ = -.02, $p$ = .44) were not significant. As well, they did not appear to mediate the relationship between partner strain and childhood adversities ($B$ = .02, $p$ = .14).

These results indicated that the measure of childhood adversities does not have an association with partner strain. While perceived control and self-acceptance did have a significant association with partner strain when analyzed individually, when analyzing the model including all three personality variables, only self-acceptance continued to be significant. As well, none of these played a mediating role in the associated between partner strain and childhood adversities. We did not evaluate the relationship or mediation between partner strain and childhood emotional or physical abuse as preliminary findings showed there was no significant association.

Hypothesis 1:
Childhood adversities will be associated with higher marital risk, partner disagreement, and partner strain and lower levels of partner support.

Table 2
*Marital Risk, Partner Disagreement, Partner Support, Partner Strain, Childhood Adversities: Pearson Correlations*

| | Marital Risk W2 | Marital Risk W1 | Partner Disagreement W2 | Partner Disagreement W1 | Partner Support W2 | Partner Support W1 | Partner Strain W2 | Partner Strain W1 | CA27 W2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Marital Risk W2 | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| Marital Risk W1 | .45** | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Partner Disagreement W2 | .43** | .29** | 1 | | | | | | |
| Partner Disagreement W1 | .24** | .38** | .45** | 1 | | | | | |
| Partner Support W2 | -.62** | -.40** | -.44** | -.26** | 1 | | | | |
| Partner Support W1 | -.32** | -.62** | -.28** | -.41** | .58** | 1 | | | |
| Partner Strain W2 | .55** | .39** | .56** | .4** | -.63** | -.41** | 1 | | |
| Partner Strain W1 | .34** | .56** | .38** | .55** | -.43** | -.63** | .63** | 1 | |
| CA27 W2 | .09** | .05* | .03 | .03 | -.03 | -.01 | .05* | .01 | 1 |

*Note.* CA27 = Childhood Adversity 27 items. W1 = Wave 1. W2 = Wave 2
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 3

*Regression of Marital Risk on Childhood Adversities, Demographics, and Hypothesized Personality Mediators*

| | Model 1 | | Model 2 CA27 + Neuroticism | | Model 3 CA27 + P. Control | | Model 4 CA27 + Self-Acceptance | | Model 5 CA27 + Perceived Control + Self-Acceptance + Neuroticism | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* |
| Marital Risk W1 | 0.4 | .00** | 0.4 | .00** | 0.39 | .00** | 0.38 | .00** | 0.38 | .00** |
| CA27 W2 | 0.09 | .01* | 0.1 | .01* | 0.08 | .01* | 0.08 | .01* | 0.08 | .01* |
| Female (0,1) | 0.14 | .02* | 0.1 | .02* | 0.14 | .02* | 0.13 | .02* | 0.14 | .02* |
| Age W1 | 0.01 | .00** | -0.0 | .00** | -0.01 | .00** | -0.01 | .00** | -0.01 | .00** |
| Education W2[a] | 0.02 | .19 | 0.0 | .17 | 0.02 | .16 | 0.02 | .07 | 0.02 | .09 |
| Neuroticism W1 | -- | -- | 0.0 | .83 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -0.04 | .5 |
| Perceived Control W1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -0.03 | .37 | -- | -- | 0.02 | .55 |
| Self-Acceptance W1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -0.03 | .00** | -0.03 | .00** |
| Intercept | 1.9 | .00** | 1.88 | .00** | 2.08 | .00** | 2.38 | .00** | 2.46 | .00** |
| $R^2$ | $R^2$ = .22 | | $R^2$ = .22 | | $R^2$ = .22 | | $R^2$ = .23 | | $R^2$ = .23 | |
| Adj $R^2$ | Adj. $R^2$ = .22 | | Adj. $R^2$ = .22 | | Adj. $R^2$ = .22 | | Adj. $R^2$ = .23 | | Adj. $R^2$ = .23 | |
| N | 1552 | | 1548 | | 1550 | | 1551 | | 1546 | |

*Note*. Coefficients are unstandardized regression coefficients. CA27 = Childhood Adversity 27 items. W1 = Wave 1. W2 = Wave 2

[a] Highest level of education completed.

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 4

*Regression of Partner Disagreement on Childhood Adversities, Demographics, and Hypothesized Personality Mediators*

| | Model 1 | | Model 2 CA27 + Neuroticism | | Model 3 CA27 + P. Control | | Model 4 CA27 + Self-Acceptance | | Model 5 CA27 + Perceived Control + Self-Acceptance + Neuroticism | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* |
| Marital Disagreement W1 | 0.43 | .00** | 0.43 | .00** | 0.42 | .00** | 0.42 | .00** | 0.41 | .00** |
| CA27 W2 | 0.01 | .88 | 0.00 | .99 | 0.01 | .91 | 0.00 | .98 | -0.00 | .99 |
| Female (0,1) | -0.03 | .78 | -0.05 | .58 | -0.05 | .59 | -0.04 | .65 | -0.06 | .51 |
| Age W1 | -0.02 | .00** | -0.02 | .00** | -0.02 | .00** | -0.02 | .00** | -0.02 | .00** |
| Education W2[a] | 0.01 | .58 | 0.02 | .37 | 0.02 | .37 | 0.02 | .29 | 0.02 | .24 |
| Neuroticism W1 | -- | -- | 0.17 | .02* | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.08 | .33 |
| Perceived Control W1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -0.15 | .00** | -- | -- | -0.07 | .23 |
| Self-Acceptance W1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -0.05 | .00** | -0.03 | .11 |
| Intercept | 3.94 | .00** | 3.5 | .00** | 4.88 | .00** | 4.74 | .00** | 4.72 | .00** |
| $R^2$ | $R^2$ = .21 | | $R^2$ = .22 | | $R^2$ = .22 | | $R^2$ = .22 | | $R^2$ = .22 | |
| Adj $R^2$ | Adj. $R^2$ = .21 | | Adj. $R^2$ = .21 | | Adj. $R^2$ = .21 | | Adj. $R^2$ = .21 | | Adj. $R^2$ = .22 | |
| N | 1552 | | 1547 | | 1549 | | 1550 | | 1545 | |

*Note*. Coefficients are unstandardized regression coefficients. CA27 = Childhood Adversity 27 items. W1 = Wave 1. W2 = Wave 2

[a] Highest level of education completed.

* p < 0.05

** p < 0.01

Table 5

*Regression of Partner Support on Childhood Adversities, Demographics, and Hypothesized Personality Mediators*

| | Model 1 | | Model 2 CA27 + Neuroticism | | Model 3 CA27 + P. Control | | Model 4 CA27 + Self-Acceptance | | Model 5 CA27 + Perceived Control + Self-Acceptance + Neuroticism | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* |
| Partner Support W1 | 0.57 | .00** | 0.57 | .00** | 0.56 | .00** | 0.56 | .00** | 0.56 | .00** |
| CA27 W2 | -0.01 | .27 | -0.01 | .31 | -0.01 | .28 | -0.01 | .36 | -0.01 | .32 |
| Female (0,1) | -0.10 | .00** | -0.10 | .00** | -0.10 | .00** | -0.1 | .00** | -0.10 | .00** |
| Age W1 | 0.00 | .00** | 0.00 | .00** | 0.00 | .00** | 0.00 | .00** | 0.00 | .00** |
| Education W2[a] | -0.01 | .07 | -0.01 | .07 | -0.01 | .05 | -0.01 | .03* | -0.01 | .04* |
| Neuroticism W1 | -- | -- | 0.01 | .47 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.03 | .13 |
| Perceived Control W1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.01 | .22 | -- | -- | 0.01 | .51 |
| Self-Acceptance W1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.01 | .13 | 0.01 | .13 |
| Intercept | 1.57 | .00** | 1.53 | .00** | 1.52 | .00** | 1.52 | .00** | 1.4 | .00** |
| $R^2$ | $R^2$ = .36 | | $R^2$ = .36 | | $R^2$ = .36 | | $R^2$ = .36 | | $R^2$ = .36 | |
| Adj $R^2$ | Adj. $R^2$ =.36 | | Adj. $R^2$ = .36 | | Adj. $R^2$ = .36 | | Adj. $R^2$ = .36 | | Adj. $R^2$ = .36 | |
| N | 1553 | | 1549 | | 1551 | | 1552 | | 1547 | |

*Note*. Coefficients are unstandardized regression coefficients. CA27 = Childhood Adversity 27 items. W1 = Wave 1. W2 = Wave 2

[a] Highest level of education completed.

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 6

*Regression of Partner Strain on Childhood Adversities, Demographics, and Hypothesized Personality Mediators*

| | Model 1 | | Model 2 CA27 + Neuroticism | | Model 3 CA27 + P. Control | | Model 4 CA27 + Self-Acceptance | | Model 5 CA27 + Perceived Control + Self-Acceptance + Neuroticism | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* |
| Partner Strain W1 | 0.63 | .00** | 0.62 | .00** | 0.61 | .00** | 0.61 | .00** | 0.61 | .00** |
| CA27 W2 | 0.02 | .12 | 0.02 | .13 | 0.02 | .12 | 0.02 | .15 | 0.02 | .14 |
| Female (0,1) | 0.05 | .04* | 0.04 | .05 | 0.04 | .05 | 0.04 | .05 | 0.04 | .05 |
| Age W1 | -0.00 | .00** | -0.00 | .00** | -0.00 | .00** | -0.00 | .00** | -0.00 | .00** |
| Education W2[a] | 0.00 | .4 | 0.00 | .35 | 0.01 | .27 | 0.01 | .18 | 0.01 | .19 |
| Neuroticism W1 | -- | -- | 0.01 | .65 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -0.02 | .44 |
| Perceived Control W1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -0.03 | .05* | -- | -- | -0.01 | .50 |
| Self-Acceptance W1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -0.01 | .00** | -0.01 | .02* |
| Intercept | 0.90 | .00** | .89 | .00** | 1.06 | .00** | 1.1 | .00** | 1.2 | .00** |
| $R^2$ | $R^2$ = .4 | | $R^2$ = .4 | | $R^2$ = .4 | | $R^2$ = .4 | | $R^2$ = .40 | |
| Adj $R^2$ | Adj. $R^2$ = .4 | | Adj. $R^2$ = .4 | | Adj. $R^2$ = .4 | | Adj. $R^2$ = .4 | | Adj. $R^2$ = .4 | |
| N | 1553 | | 1549 | | 1551 | | 1552 | | 1547 | |

*Note.* Coefficients are unstandardized regression coefficients. CA27 = Childhood Adversity 27 items. W1 = Wave 1. W2 = Wave 2

[a] Highest level of educational attainment.

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Hypothesis 2:
Emotional and physical abuse during childhood will be associated with higher marital risk, partner disagreement, and partner strain and lower levels of partner support.

Table 7
*Marital Risk, Partner Disagreement, Partner Support, Partner Strain, Childhood Emotional Abuse, Childhood Physical Abuse: Pearson Correlations*

| | Marital Risk W2 | Marital Risk W1 | Partner Disagree-ment W2 | Partner Disagree-ment W1 | Partner Support W2 | Partner Support W1 | Partner Strain W2 | Partner Strain W1 | Childhood Emotional Abuse W1 | Childhood Physical Abuse W1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Marital Risk W2 | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Marital Risk W1 | .45** | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| Partner Disagreement W2 | .43** | .29** | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Partner Disagreement W1 | .24** | .38** | .45** | 1 | | | | | | |
| Partner Support W2 | -.62** | -.41** | -.44** | -.26** | 1 | | | | | |
| Partner Support W1 | -.32** | -.62** | -.28** | -.41** | .58** | 1 | | | | |
| Partner Strain W2 | .55** | .39** | .56** | .4** | -.63** | -.41** | 1 | | | |
| Partner Strain W1 | .34** | .56** | .38** | .54** | -.43** | -.63** | .62** | 1 | | |
| Childhood Emotional Abuse W1 | .13** | .16** | .13** | .16** | -.08** | -.08** | .16** | .18** | 1 | |
| Childhood Physical Abuse W1 | .09** | .12** | .08** | .12** | -.05* | -.05 | .11** | .14** | .68** | 1 |

*Note.* W1 = Wave 1. W2 = Wave 2
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 8

*Regression of Marital Risk, Partner Disagreement, Partner Support, and Partner Strain on Childhood Emotional Abuse*

| | Marital Risk W2 | | Partner Disagreement W2 | | Partner Support W2 | | Partner Strain W2 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* |
| Outcome at W1 | 0.4 | .00** | 0.42 | .00** | 0.56 | .00** | 0.62 | .00** |
| Childhood Emotional Abuse W1 | 0.08 | .08 | 0.14 | .06 | -0.01 | .31 | 0.03 | .07 |
| Female (0,1) | 1.15 | .01* | -0.02 | .82 | -0.10 | .00** | 0.05 | .04* |
| Age W1 | -0.01 | .00** | -0.02 | .00** | 0.00 | .00** | -0.00 | .00** |
| Education W2[a] | 0.01 | .28 | 0.01 | .51 | -0.01 | .1 | 0.00 | .47 |
| Intercept | 1.87 | .00** | 3.77 | .00** | 1.59 | .00** | 0.89 | .00** |
| $R^2$ | $R^2 = .22$ | | $R^2 = .21$ | | $R^2 = .36$ | | $R^2 = .4$ | |
| Adj $R^2$ | Adj. $R^2 = .22$ | | Adj. $R^2 = .21$ | | Adj. $R^2 = .35$ | | Adj. $R^2 = .39$ | |
| N | 1531 | | 1530 | | 1532 | | 1532 | |

*Note.* Coefficients are unstandardized regression coefficients. W1 = Wave 1. W2 = Wave 2

[a] Highest level of educational attainment

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 9

*Regression of Marital Risk, Partner Disagreement, Partner Support, and Partner Strain on Childhood Physical Abuse*

| | Marital Risk W2 | | Partner Disagreement W2 | | Partner Support W2 | | Partner Strain W2 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* |
| Outcome at W1 | 0.4 | .00** | 0.43 | .00** | 0.57 | .00** | 0.62 | .00** |
| Childhood Physical Abuse W1 | 0.06 | .33 | 0.06 | .51 | -0.02 | .37 | 0.03 | .19 |
| Female (0,1) | 0.14 | .01* | -0.02 | .87 | -0.10 | .00** | 0.05 | .03* |
| Age W1 | -0.01 | .00** | -0.02 | .00** | 0.00 | .00** | -0.00 | .00** |
| Education W2[a] | 0.01 | .31 | 0.01 | .49 | -0.01 | .09 | 0.00 | .47 |
| Intercept | 1.94 | .00** | 3.91 | .00** | 1.58 | .00** | 0.90 | .00** |
| $R^2$ | $R^2 = .22$ | | $R^2 = .21$ | | $R^2 = .36$ | | $R^2 = .39$ | |
| Adj $R^2$ | Adj. $R^2 = .22$ | | Adj. $R^2 = .20$ | | Adj. $R^2 = .35$ | | Adj. $R^2 = .39$ | |
| N | 1538 | | 1537 | | 1539 | | 1539 | |

*Note.* Coefficients are unstandardized regression coefficients. W1 = Wave 1. W2 = Wave 2

[a] Highest level of educational attainment.

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Hypothesis 3:
Childhood adversities will be associated with personality traits in adulthood, specifically, lower agency, agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness to experience, and higher neuroticism.

Table 10
*Childhood Adversities, Agency, Agreeableness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, Openness to Experience: Pearson Correlations*

| | CA27 W2 | Agency | Agreeableness | Extraversion | Neuroticism | Conscientiousness | Openness to Experience |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CA27 W2 | 1 | | | | | | |
| Agency | .00 | 1 | | | | | |
| Agreeableness | -.01 | .06* | 1 | | | | |
| Extraversion | .01 | .51** | .50** | 1 | | | |
| Neuroticism | .06* | -.08** | -.05* | -.13** | 1 | | |
| Conscientiousness | -.02 | .21** | .23** | .2** | -.16** | 1 | |
| Openness to Experience | -.00 | .50** | .33** | .48** | -.17** | .24** | 1 |

*Note.* CA27 = Childhood Adversity 27 items. W2 = Wave 2
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Hypothesis 4:
Childhood emotional and physical abuse will be associated with personality traits in adulthood, specifically, lower agency, agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness to experience, and higher neuroticism.

Table 11
*Childhood emotional and physical abuse, Agency, Agreeableness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, Openness to Experience: Pearson Correlations*

| | Childhood Emotional Abuse W1 | Childhood Physical Abuse W1 | Agency | Agreeableness | Extraversion | Neuroticism | Conscientiousness | Openness to Experience |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Childhood Emotional Abuse W1 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Childhood Physical Abuse W1 | .68 | 1 | | | | | | |
| Agency | .05 | .04 | 1 | | | | | |
| Agreeableness | -.1** | -.08** | .06* | 1 | | | | |
| Extraversion | -.04 | -.01 | .51** | .50** | 1 | | | |
| Neuroticism | .18** | .12** | -.08** | -.05* | -.13** | 1 | | |
| Conscientiousness | -.07** | -.05** | .21** | .23** | .2** | -.16** | 1 | |
| Openness to Experience | .02 | .02 | .50** | .33** | .48** | -.17** | .24** | 1 |

*Note.* W1 = Wave 1.
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Hypothesis 5:
We further hypothesized that the personality traits of perceived control and self-acceptance would mediate the effects of childhood adversities, emotional abuse, and physical abuse negatively on marital risk, partner disagreement, and partner strain, and positively on partner support.

Table 12
*Marital Risk, Partner Disagreement, Partner Support, Partner Strain, Childhood Adversities, Perceived Control, and Self-Acceptance: Pearson Correlations*

| | Marital Risk W2 | Marital Risk W1 | Partner Disagree-ment W2 | Partner Disagree-ment W1 | Partner Support W2 | Partner Support W1 | Partner Strain W2 | Partner Strain W1 | CA27 W2 | Childhood Emotional Abuse W1 | Childhood Physical Abuse W1 | Perceived Control W1 | Self-Acceptance W1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Marital Risk W2 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Marital Risk W1 | .45 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Partner Disagree-ment W2 | .43 | .29 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Partner Disagree-ment W1 | .24 | .38 | .45 | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Partner Support W2 | -.62 | -.41 | -.44 | -.26 | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| Partner Support W1 | -.32 | -.62 | -.28 | -.41 | .58 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Partner Strain W2 | .55 | .39 | .56 | .4 | -.63 | -.41 | 1 | | | | | | |
| Partner Strain W1 | .34 | .56 | .38 | .55 | -.43 | -.63 | .63 | 1 | | | | | |
| CA27 W2 | .09 | .05 | .03 | .03 | -.03 | -.01 | .05 | .01 | 1 | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Childhood Emotional Abuse W1 | .13 | .16 | .13 | .16 | -.08 | -.08 | .16 | .18 | .17 | 1 | | | |
| Childhood Physical Abuse W1 | .09 | .12 | .08 | .12 | -.05 | -.05 | .12 | .14 | .17 | .68 | 1 | | |
| Perceived Control W1 | -.10 | -.22 | -.14 | -.21 | .18 | .28 | -.20 | -.28 | -.03 | -.13 | -.07 | 1 | |
| Self-Acceptance W1 | -.18 | -.27 | -.16 | -.21 | .19 | .29 | -.22 | -.27 | -.05 | -.14 | -.1 | .56 | 1 |

*Note.* CA27 = Childhood Adversity 27 items. W1 = Wave 1. W2 = Wave 2
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 13

*Regression of Marital Risk on Childhood Emotional and Physical Abuse, Demographics, and Hypothesized Personality Mediators*

| | Model 1 | | Model 2 CA27 + Neuroticism | | Model 3 CA27 + P. Control | | Model 4 CA27 + Self-Acceptance | | Model 5 CA27 + Perceived Control + Self-Acceptance + Neuroticism | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* |
| Marital Risk W1 | 0.39 | .00** | 0.39 | .00** | 0.39 | .00** | 0.38 | .00** | 0.38 | .00** |
| Emotional Abuse W1 | 0.09 | .14 | 0.09 | .13 | 0.08 | .17 | 0.08 | .19 | 0.09 | .16 |
| Physical Abuse W1 | -0.02 | .78 | -0.02 | .76 | -0.02 | .80 | -0.02 | .78 | -0.02 | .77 |
| Female (0,1) | 0.15 | .01* | 0.14 | .02* | 0.14 | .02* | 0.14 | .02* | 0.14 | .02* |
| Age W1 | 0.01 | .00** | -0.01 | .00** | -0.01 | .00** | -0.01 | .00** | -0.01 | .00** |
| Education W2[a] | 0.01 | .29 | 0.01 | .28 | 0.01 | .26 | 0.02 | .13 | 0.02 | .16 |
| Neuroticism W1 | -- | -- | -0.00 | .96 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -0.04 | .4 |
| Perceived Control W1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -0.02 | .48 | -- | -- | 0.03 | .49 |
| Self-Acceptance W1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -0.03 | .01** | -0.03 | .00** |
| Intercept | 1.87 | .00** | 1.88 | .00** | 2.02 | .00** | 2.35 | .00** | 2.44 | .00** |
| $R^2$ | $R^2$ = .22 | | $R^2$ = .22 | | $R^2$ = .22 | | $R^2$ = .22 | | $R^2$ = .22 | |
| Adj $R^2$ | Adj. $R^2$ = .22 | | Adj. $R^2$ = .22 | | Adj. $R^2$ = .22 | | Adj. $R^2$ = .22 | | Adj. $R^2$ = .22 | |
| N | 1530 | | 1526 | | 1528 | | 1529 | | 1524 | |

*Note.* Coefficients are unstandardized regression coefficients. CA27 = Childhood Adversity 27 items. W1 = Wave 1. W2 = Wave 2

[a] Highest level of educational attainment.

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 14
*Regression of Partner Disagreement on Childhood Emotional and Physical Abuse, Demographics, and Hypothesized Personality Mediators*

| | Model 1 | | Model 2 CA27 + Neuroticism | | Model 3 CA27 + P. Control | | Model 4 CA27 + Self-Acceptance | | Model 5 CA27 + Perceived Control + Self-Acceptance + Neuroticism | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* | *B* | *p* |
| Marital Disagreement W1 | 0.42 | .00** | 0.42 | .00** | 0.41 | .00** | 0.41 | .00** | 0.40 | .00** |
| Childhood Emotional Abuse W1 | 0.19 | .05 | 0.17 | .07 | 0.16 | .09 | 0.17 | .07 | 0.15 | .11 |
| Childhood Physical Abuse W1 | -0.11 | .39 | -0.11 | .39 | -0.1 | .45 | -0.11 | .39 | -0.11 | .42 |
| Female (0,1) | -0.02 | .81 | -0.05 | .61 | -0.05 | .62 | -0.04 | .66 | -0.06 | .54 |
| Age W1 | -0.02 | .00** | -0.16 | .00** | -0.02 | .00** | -0.02 | .00** | -0.02 | .00** |
| Education W2[a] | 0.01 | .51 | 0.02 | .34 | 0.02 | .33 | 0.02 | .25 | 0.02 | .21 |
| Neuroticism W1 | -- | -- | 0.16 | .03* | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.07 | .42 |
| Perceived Control W1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -0.15 | .01** | -- | -- | -0.07 | .27 |
| Self-Acceptance W1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -0.05 | .00** | -0.03 | .00** |
| Intercept | 3.78 | .00** | 3.41 | .00** | 4.72 | .00** | 4.61 | .00** | 4.64 | .00** |
| $R^2$ | $R^2$ = .21 | | $R^2$ = .21 | | $R^2$ = .21 | | $R^2$ = .21 | | $R^2$ = .21 | |
| Adj $R^2$ | Adj. $R^2$ = .20 | | Adj. $R^2$ = .21 | | Adj. $R^2$ = .21 | | Adj. $R^2$ = .21 | | Adj. $R^2$ = .20 | |
| N | 1529 | | 1525 | | 1527 | | 1528 | | 152 | |

*Note.* Coefficients are unstandardized regression coefficients. CA27 = Childhood Adversity 27 items. W1 = Wave 1. W2 = Wave 2
[a] Highest level of educational attainment.
* p < 0.05
** p < 0.01

## Discussion

Understanding the ways in which childhood adversities may be associated with personality development and later marital functioning not only can help understand the factors that play into decreased marital satisfaction but can also provide a guide to what factors may mediate these associations. In this project, we explored ways in which childhood traumas may be associated with marital relationships in long-term married couples.

The current study examined the association between childhood adversity and emotional abuse and physical abuse with marital risk, partner disagreement, partner strain, and partner support. As well, we analyzed how personality traits may be shaped by these childhood adversities and abuse. We further hypothesized that personality traits, self-acceptance, and perceived control would moderate these relationships. We found that there was an association between childhood adversities and marital risk and between childhood emotional and physical abuse and marital risk but not to the other outcomes variables of partner disagreement, strain, and support. Neuroticism, perceived control, and self-acceptance did not moderate these relationships. Additionally, we found that childhood emotional and physical abuse were associated with agreeableness, neuroticism and conscientiousness but that childhood adversities were not.

Overall, these results indicate that childhood adversities have a strong association with marital risk but not with partner disagreement, partner support, or partner strain. The personality traits of neuroticism, perceived control, and self-acceptance do not mediate this relationship. Additionally, although these results provide support to the theory that childhood emotional and/or physical abuse effects the development of personality traits, these results provide no support to the theory that they will impact later marital functioning. These findings do not

provide support to the theory that personality traits develop over time and impact marital functioning.

Society is built upon a platform of strong families, and the broader impacts further research are wide reaching. However, the current study is limited in multiple ways. The most notable limitation of the current study is the database used for analysis. While it is possible to evaluate the relationships between dependent and independent variables, a causal relationship is unable to be ascertained with the provided data. As well, analysis only included those participants who were in stable marriages between the times of Wave 1 and Wave 3. This most likely plays a strong role in the outcome variables of marital risk and partner disagreement, strain, and support. In order to get a more comprehensive view of marital functioning, it would be helpful to evaluate similar models incorporating current stressors within marriages as well as exploring a dyadic model to see how social support could be mediating or moderating the relationships. In order to so, a different data set would need to be analyzed as the MIDUS does not have dyadic data.

There is still much to be learned by evaluating the effect of childhood adversity and abuse on marital functioning. Future research should focus on alternative models that may mediate the association between marital risk and childhood adversities and abuse. The results of this study offered preliminary evidence that perceived control, self-acceptance, and neuroticism could mediate the effects of adversities and abuse on marital functioning, but when further analyzed, the personality mediation model was not supported. This may indicate that other factors need to be considered such as how childhood adversities and abuse may contribute to environmental or household communication and interaction . The models also did not explore gender differences, which could be an avenue for future research.

As well, interaction models could allow us to explore further the ways in which personality may be formed and the role it plays in interpersonal relationships. Although the current research did not support our hypotheses, there is still much to analyze to continue to explore these theories. The role that adversities and/or abuse play on later marital relationships is one that offers many avenues for further exploration.

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## Appendix A

E11. The following questions are about experiences you may have had as CHILD or TEENAGER. Check the appropriate boxes next to any of the following experiences you have had. For those you checked, indicate how old you were, and if it affected you, positively or negatively, both initially, and in the long run.

| | | **How did this affect you?** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Very Negatively | | Not at all | | Very Positively |
| a. Repeated year of school | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| At what age(s) did this happen? _____ | In the long run? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| b. Sent away from home because you did something wrong | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| At what age(s) did this happen? _____ | In the long run? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| c. Father or mother did not have a job when they wanted to be working | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| At what age(s) did this happen? _____ | In the long run? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| d. One or both parents drank so often it caused problems | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| At what age(s) did this happen? _____ | In the long run? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| e. One or both parents used drugs so often it regularly caused problems | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| At what age(s) did this happen? _____ | In the long run? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| f. Dropped out of school | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| At what age(s) did this happen? _____ | In the long run? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| g. Expelled or suspended from school | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| At what age(s) did this happen? _____ | In the long run? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |

The following questions are about experiences you may have had at ANYTIME. Check the appropriate boxes next to any of the following experiences

| you have had. For those you checked, indicate how old you were, and if it affected you positively or negatively, both initially, and in the long run. | **How did this affect you?** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Very Negatively | | Not at all | | Very Positively |
| h. Flunked out of school | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| At what age(s) did this happen? _____ | In the long run? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| i. Fired from a job | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| At what age(s) did this happen? _____ | In the long run? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| j. Did not have a job for a long time when you wanted to be working | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| At what age(s) did this happen? _____ | In the long run? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| k. A parent died | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| At what age(s) did this happen? _____ | In the long run? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| l. Parents divorced | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| At what age(s) did this happen? _____ | In the long run? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| m. Spouse/partner engaged in (marital) infidelity | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| At what age(s) did this happen? _____ | In the long run? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| n. Significant difficulties with in-laws | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| At what age(s) did this happen? _____ | In the long run? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| o. Brother or sister died | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| At what age(s) did this happen? _____ | In the long run? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |

| | | **How did this affect you?** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Very Negatively | | Not at all | | Very Positively |
| p. Child died | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| At what age(s) did this happen? _____ | In the long run? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| q. Child experienced life threatening accident or injury | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| At what age(s) did this happen? _____ | In the long run? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| r. Lost your home to fire, flood, natural disaster, etc. | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| At what age(s) did this happen? _____ | In the long run? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| s. Physically assaulted or attacked | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| At what age(s) did this happen? _____ | In the long run? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| t. Sexually assaulted (e.g. forced sexual intercourse or other unwanted sexual contact) | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| At what age(s) did this happen? _____ | In the long run? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| u. Serious legal difficulties/prison | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| At what age(s) did this happen? _____ | In the long run? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| v. Detention in jail or comparable institution | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| At what age(s) did this happen? _____ | In the long run? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |

| | **How did this affect you?** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Very Negatively | | Not at all | Very Positively |
| w. Declared bankruptcy | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| At what age(s) did this happen? | In the long | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| _____ | run? | | | | | |
| x. Suffered a financial or property loss unrelated to work | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| At what age(s) did this happen? _____ | In the long run? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| y. Went on welfare | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| At what age(s) did this happen? _____ | In the long run? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| z. Entered the armed forces | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| At what age(s) did this happen? _____ | In the long run? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| aa. Experienced combat | Initially? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| At what age(s) did this happen? _____ | In the long run? | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |

## Appendix B

E17. Below, and on the next page, are three lists of things that happen to some children. After each list, please indicate how often your parents, siblings, or anyone else did things like this to you. (If a question does not apply because there was no such person in your family when you were growing up, circle "8".)

| LIST A | |
|---|---|
| Insulted you or swore at you<br>Sulked or refused to talk to you<br>Stomped out of the room | Did or said something to spite you<br>Threatened to hit you<br>Smashed or kicked something in anger |

| | | OFTEN | SOME-TIMES | RARELY | NEVER | DOES NOT APPLY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | During your childhood, how often did your mother, or the woman who raised you, do any of the things on List A to you? ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 8 |
| b. | During your childhood, how often did your father, or the man who raised you, do any of the things on List A to you? ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 8 |
| c. | During your childhood, how often did any of your brothers do any of the things on List A to you? .... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 8 |
| d. | During your childhood, how often did any of your sisters do any of the things on List A to you? ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 8 |
| e. | During your childhood, how often did anybody else do any of the things on List A to you? ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |

| LIST B |
|---|
| Pushed, grabbed, or shoved you<br>Slapped you<br>Threw something at you |

| | | OFTEN | SOME-TIMES | RARELY | NEVER | DOES NOT APPLY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| f. | During your childhood, how often did your mother, or the woman who raised you, do any of the things on List B to you? ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 8 |
| g. | During your childhood, how often did your father, or the man who raised you, do any of the things on List B to you? ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 8 |
| h. | During your childhood, how often did any of your brothers do any of the things on List B to you? .... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 8 |
| i. | During your childhood, how often did any of your sisters do any of the things on List B to you? ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 8 |
| j. | During your childhood, how often did anybody else do any of the things on List B to you? ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | LIST C | | | | | |
| | Kicked, bit, or hit you with a fist<br>Hit or tried to hit you with something<br>Beat you up | Choked you<br>Burned or scalded you | | | | |
| | | OFTEN | SOME-TIMES | RARELY | NEVER | DOES NOT APPLY |
| k. | During your childhood, how often did your mother, or the woman who raised you, do any of the things on List C to you? ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 8 |
| l. | During your childhood, how often did your father, or the man who raised you, do any of the things on List C to you? ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 8 |
| m. | During your childhood, how often did any of your brothers do any of the things on List C to you? .... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 8 |
| n. | During your childhood, how often did any of your sisters do any of the things on List C to you? ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 8 |
| o. | During your childhood, how often did anybody else do any of the things on List C to you? ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |

# Appendix C

E6. Please indicate how well each of the following describes you.

| | A lot | Some | A little | Not at all | | A lot | Some | A little | Not at all |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Outgoing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | q. Imaginative | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. Helpful | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | r. Softhearted | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. Moody | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | s. Calm | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d. Organized | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | t. Outspoken | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| e. Self-confident | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | u. Intelligent | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| f. Friendly | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | v. Curious | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| g. Warm | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | w. Active | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| h. Worrying | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | x. Careless | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| i. Responsible | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | y. Broad-minded | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| j. Forceful | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | z. Sympathetic | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| k. Lively | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | aa. Talkative | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| l. Caring | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | bb. Sophisticated | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| m. Nervous | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | cc. Adventurous | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| n. Creative | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | dd. Dominant | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| o. Assertive | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | ee. Thorough | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| p. Hardworking | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | | | | |

## Appendix D

L7. During the past year, how often have you thought your relationship might be in trouble?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Once
- ☐ A few times
- ☐ Most of the time
- ☐ All of the time

L8. It is always difficult to predict what will happen in a relationship, but realistically, what do you think the chances are that you and your partner will eventually separate?

- ☐ Very likely
- ☐ Somewhat likely
- ☐ Not very likely
- ☐ Not likely at all

Appendix E

L9. Couples often disagree about a lot of issues in life. How much do you and your spouse or partner disagree on the following issues?

| | A lot | Some | A little | Not at all |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Money matters, such as how much to spend, save or invest. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. Household tasks, such as what needs doing and who does it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. Leisure time activities, such as what to do and with whom. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |